

been waging a deadly insurgency and attacking Shiite citizens and mosques. In response, Shiite commando units, some of which are affiliated with the government, have been conducting reprisal attacks against mosques and civilians in Sunni communities. The sectarian 'cleansing' of various cities around the country has driven tens of thousands of Iraqis to flee their homes.

"There can be no victors in a full-scale sectarian conflict in Iraq. One only has to recall the tragedy that was Lebanon's 15-year civil war to know that all parties will be the losers in a sectarian war. Even the minute personal gains achieved by trigger-happy gunmen will be erased whenever men with bigger guns come along to exact their revenge.

"Iraqis are currently heading in the same direction as the Lebanese were in 1975. And sadly, they have no one to turn to but themselves if they want to avoid civil war. They cannot turn to the U.S. military and ask it to use its muscle, because that will only stoke more intercommunal hostilities. Iraq's neighbors, who during a meeting over the weekend failed to offer the Iraqi people any tangible assistance, proved that they are unwilling to do much more than issue rhetorical statements. The responsibility of avoiding full-scale civil war rests squarely on the laps of Iraqis. During this volatile period, it is crucial that all Iraqi leaders act responsibly and refrain from inflammatory acts and statements that can only make matters worse."

Now, it is clear from this editorial and from all the papers if you read them in the Middle East that the longer we stay there, the longer the violence goes on. If we want peace, if we want a stable government for the Iraqi people, if we want a society to develop in a civil way, we must begin the process of getting out. We cannot say we are going to stay there until it is quiet because it is clear from editorials like this one in *The Daily Star* and many other newspapers across the Middle East that it will not happen as long as we stay.

We are considered the occupiers. The government is considered one that we created. Our fear, down at 1600 Pennsylvania, is that if we go, they will create a government that we do not like. But democracy requires that you trust the people to choose their own government.

We will talk more about this in an hour from now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LYNCH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. MCKINNEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MCKINNEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BORDER SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that and this evening we are going to spend some time talking about the issue of border security, and it is important to our great Nation; but before I begin, I would like to take just a few moments of personal privilege and remember a friend that my community lost over the weekend.

REMEMBERING SUNTRUST'S BRIAN WILLIAMS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, our community of Nashville, Tennessee, and the Nashville banking industry lost an entrepreneurial banker, Brian Williams, who was the Music Row banker for SunTrust Bank, and he was such an extraordinary, truly extraordinary, man. Certainly, we feel that we have lost a visionary in not only the banking industry but in the music business industry.

Brian is one of those who really understood that the entertainment industry and the music industry is a business, and he approached it that way and he pioneered the music industry's banking division for SunTrust Bank.

He is a man who I honestly believe in all my years of working on the intellectual property issue, whether as head of the Tennessee Film Entertainment Music Commission or as a member of the State Senate or now as a Member of Congress, he understood the ability of intellectual property to generate an income. He understood that intellectual property is private property, and he understood how royalty income could indeed work for our creative community.

He is truly going to be deeply, deeply missed and to his wife, Marion, and his parents, our thoughts are with you all.

Now, to our issue of immigration. Mr. Speaker, the question that we have before us is one that we are looking at as an issue of border security, and I feel that many times this issue becomes clouded as we try to talk about so many different components of border security and immigration and illegal entry into the country and employer verification. Sometimes looking at the great big pie, the great big pie of the border security/immigration issue, all rolled into one, becomes very, very difficult for many of us.

We have started through a process of beginning to break it apart and take things one at a time and focus intently on this issue; and, indeed, it is an issue that we have had before us. As a former Member of the Judiciary Committee and the Immigration Subcommittee there, we have kept our focus on how

do we make certain that we keep this Nation secure, how do we make certain that border security is addressed as national security, and how do we keep America safe, how do we make certain that we know who is coming in this country, how do we make certain that we know why they are coming and how do we make certain that we know the people who have come here have come for the right reasons, have come with the proper paperwork and do not overstay those visas and that paperwork.

This is a question to look at. It is a discussion to engage in and it is an issue that I would hope every Member of this body, from both sides of the aisle, would participate in discussing and finding a solution.

Of course, the House has passed a bill. We passed it last year. We sent it to the Senate. It has first and foremost a focus on securing this border. We know that this is a problem that the American people are frustrated with. They are frustrated with D.C. and I understand why. We are, too. Some of these issues you can absolutely talk to death. The American people are ready for action, and indeed, the House is the body that has been leading on that action.

As we have watched illegal entry, the act of illegal entry, and that is our focus, as I said earlier, it is not immigration, our focus is on illegal entry, and addressing the act that is being committed as individuals, as weapons, as drugs all come into this country illegally, this is an enormous problem. It is not a secret. The American people know this, and that is why they have joined with the House in saying this needs to be handled.

Mr. Speaker, lack of action on this issue over the past few years and lack of responsiveness by some who want to confuse it by making it a big comprehensive, difficult-to-get-your-arms-around issue has caused a couple of things to happen, but that is the way it is many times, in life, in politics, and certainly in this issue of security.

The fact that action was not taken when the House first got ready to move forward and that we have seen thousands and hundreds of thousands of people illegally enter this country has caused every town to be a border town and every State to be a border State.

When I was in the State senate in Tennessee, I started working on this issue, trying to make certain that those that illegally entered this country could not secure valid driver's licenses and then have carried that activity with me, coming here to Congress and again continuing to focus on this issue.

As I said, every State is a border State, and we are hearing from States like my State of Tennessee and other States around the country. Border security is the number one issue. We have seen enormous populations of people who are not legally in the States gravitate to certain States for specific reasons, and Americans know that

there ought to be laws that are enforced. They know that there are laws on the books, and they cannot figure out why in the world, why in the world those laws are not being enforced, why are we choosing not to enforce those laws and defend those borders.

Our constituents are right to ask those questions. We need to tackle the illegal entry problem. We need to do this one step at a time. We need to demonstrate in good faith to the American people that efficient, effective border security can be accomplished and we are ready to move forward on it. We encourage the other body and we encourage the American people to join with us on this issue and addressing this issue.

At this time, I would like to yield to my colleague from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) for some of his thoughts and comments on this issue.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I certainly appreciate her leadership of what I believe is perhaps the number one issue that is facing us today, and that is clearly winning this war against terrorism. There is no doubt in my mind, and I believe no doubt in the minds of most Americans, that border security is homeland security.

Mr. Speaker, we ignore our borders at our own peril. Too often even today we do not know who is coming across our borders, we do not know what their purpose is, we do not know where they are going. And times have changed; times have changed since 9/11.

There was a time in our Nation's history where the illegal entry problem was one of a trickle. Today, it is a flood. There were over 1.2 million apprehensions of those who entered our country illegally last year, and those were just the ones that were apprehended. Again, we do not know who all these people are. We do not know what their purpose is. We ignore border security at our own peril.

I live in Texas, Mr. Speaker, one of the border States. Mexico is a very important neighbor to us. We have had excellent relations with the country for many, many years; and there is no doubt that a number of those who enter our country illegally are simply people who are trying to feed their families; and I understand that, Mr. Speaker.

□ 2000

I have compassion for these people, but at the same time we must protect Americans. We must know who is coming across the border. And what we see, particularly when we talk to people on the front lines of this war, particularly our border sheriffs, we learn that the border is a very different place than it was 5 years ago, 10 years ago, 20 years ago.

Increasingly what we see is a very armed and dangerous group of those who enter this country illegally. Increasingly we are seeing AK-47s, rocket-propelled grenades associated with

those in the drug traffic. And increasingly our border sheriffs are concerned about what contact and what connection the drug lords may have with the terrorists.

We hear from our Border Patrol that attacks on agents are up. We have our border sheriffs in Texas tell us that they believe, they believe that some of the drug shipments across the border have come with military escorts. Increasingly we know that we are being infiltrated by the MS-13 gangs from Central America.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we ignore border security at our own peril. And perhaps most importantly, I am not sure if all of the American people know this, but Iraqis have been captured trying to infiltrate our southern border. And we know, we know from the Department of Homeland Security, that al-Qaeda has made contact with human smugglers in Mexico.

We ignore border security at our own peril. But besides being a threat to our homeland security, unbridled illegal entry into the U.S. is not just a threat to our border security, it is a threat to our economic security as well. Coming from Texas, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the taxpayers of Texas pay billions of dollars to educate the children of those who have entered illegally. That is just not fair, Mr. Speaker, it is just not fair.

Hundreds of millions have been spent on health care. Now, again we do not want to deny essential emergency health care to anybody who walks into the room. But to have this serve as some kind of magnet for illegal entry is just wrong, and the cost associated with incarceration, again unchecked illegal entry into this country is a threat to our border security, it is a threat to our economic security.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, it is a threat to the rule of law, one of the foundations upon which this great Nation was built, a nation of laws, not of men. Is the first lesson we want to teach somebody who comes to this country that our laws are optional, that they are mere suggestions? Do we want to tell people that, well, because you managed to sneak across some border, you fooled us; here are your citizenship papers? I do not think so, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe that that is what we need.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as important as this debate is, I agree with the gentlewoman from Tennessee that unfortunately, unfortunately, there are many in this country, there are many, many in this body that are trying to take a debate that should be about whether America has the will and the means to control its border and whether there is a right way and a wrong way to enter America, they are trying to twist that, they are trying to twist this into some kind of debate about ethnicity. They are trying to twist this into a debate about whether America is a nation of immigrants.

I do not see anybody debating that proposition, Mr. Speaker. America is a

nation of immigrants. It always has been; I believe it always will be. We would like to shine up the Statute of Liberty. We want to find room for people who want to work hard and who love freedom. But there is a right way and a wrong way to come to America.

My friends and my neighbors come to the front door in the light of day and they knock on the door and they seek permission to come into my home. They do not sneak in the back door under the cover of night. There is a right way and a wrong way to come to America.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest privileges and honors I have had as a Member of Congress took place Saturday before last in Garland, Texas, in my congressional district. I spoke to a swearing-in ceremony of 95 new Americans. And it was one of the most awe-inspiring experiences I have had as a Member of Congress. And let me tell you a few things about these 95 new Americans I was able to welcome as new Americans into Garland, Texas.

Number one, each and every one of them, Mr. Speaker, waited in line, 3 years, 5 years, 7 years, 10 years, to come and achieve that great privilege of American citizenship. They followed the rules. They learned the English language, which is the language of opportunity and something that binds us together as a people.

Mr. Speaker, besides that, they learned our history; they learned our culture. I would wager that a number of them could do better on an American history test than some of us, some of us in this august body here.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I do not know why, but as a Member of Congress, sometimes people actually want to have their picture taken with you. I am flattered and humbled that so many of these 95 new Americans wanted to have their photo taken with me.

I met a young lady who was born in Laos, who is now an American. And I asked her, "What is it that made you want to come to America?" after she had her photo taken with me.

It was a one-word answer, Mr. Speaker. We all know what that answer is. Freedom. Freedom. These were 95 new Americans who wanted to roll up their sleeves, they wanted to work hard, and they loved freedom. And we welcome them. We welcome them into our midst.

And so, again, Mr. Speaker, we are not having a debate about who it is that makes the best Americans. We are not having a debate about taking down the Statute of Liberty as many would want you to believe. We are having a debate about, after 9/11, can we ignore our borders? And we are having a debate about whether or not there is a right way and a wrong way to come to America. That is what this debate is about, Mr. Speaker.

It is one of the most important debates that is going to take place in this body, in this institution this year. And

so much is riding on it. Because I believe, as do so many of my constituents, that the number one threat to our Nation, and the number one threat to our families is terrorism. And essential to winning the war on terror is controlling our borders.

And, with that, I will yield back to the gentlewoman.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman. He is so correct. An essential element in winning the war on terror is controlling our borders.

And one of the things that we heard this weekend, this past week, on Tuesday as we took our first field hearing to San Diego, was, we heard how the Iraqis have been reaching into Central America and into Mexico, and how al-Qaeda is reaching in there and doing what is necessary for them to make these connections to be able to enter through this southern border.

What a frightening thought that is to us. How very difficult it should be for them. But, unfortunately, it seems they are saying how very easy it can be. Mr. Speaker, think of that. Al-Qaeda and those that would seek to do us harm are choosing to see if they can come across our southern border, one more good reason why we should be certain that we secure that border.

The gentleman from Texas also said something else I want to return to. We ignore this at our own peril. And we hear that repeatedly. We would ignore this at our own peril.

And I mentioned the hearing that we held in San Diego. Chairman ROYCE did a terrific job chairing this hearing for the International Relations Committee, focused on terrorism and border security. And I commend our leadership, our Speaker and our leader for making certain that we, as a body, have the opportunity to go and listen and talk with the American people on this issue.

And as we were at Imperial Beach outside of San Diego on that border, we heard from sheriffs, we heard from border agents, and we heard from those who have studied this issue closely, very closely over the past several years, just not weeks, not just months, but several years.

And each and every one of them talked about the importance that is upon us for examining and moving forward with action in securing this border. And the gentleman from Texas is right. We ignore this at our own peril.

He also mentioned with the State of Texas, the billions that are spent on education, the hundreds of millions that are spent on health care for those that have illegally entered this country. He also mentioned incarceration and the hundreds of millions of dollars that are spent in his State of Texas on incarceration.

I asked the sheriff from Los Angeles County during the hearing in San Diego what they spent every year on incarceration, because 26 percent of their jail population are criminal aliens; 70 percent of those are repeat

offenders. They are spending about \$80 million a year, \$80 million of taxpayer dollars each year in Los Angeles County for incarceration of those who have committed offenses and are being held and detained as criminal aliens.

Another point that the gentleman talked about was that our laws are not up for discussion. And one of my constituents over the weekend said, you know, U.S. citizenship is not a lottery, and it is not. And this comment came from a gentleman who is a veteran. And he grabbed me by the arm as we were out celebrating our freedom, celebrating Independence Day, and looked me straight in the eye. And he said, "Marsha, I fought for this country. I fought for this freedom. I fought for everyone to have this citizenship. Let me tell you right now, it is not a lottery."

Our laws are not up for discussion, and our citizenship is not a lottery; and we need to remember that. And I appreciated those comments from that gentleman.

I had another constituent who said, "You know, if you illegally enter my car, my bank account, my private information, my house, my business, my church, you are going to pay a penalty. You have committed a crime. Why in the world does that not apply to this great Nation?"

Mr. Speaker, the American people understand that the issue at hand is border security and illegal entry. Many in this body and certainly our leadership concur with that. Legal immigrants, as the gentleman from Texas talked about the naturalization ceremony where he spoke, legal immigrants know that the laws on the books are for abiding. And they appreciate that and they honor it.

And we want to be certain that those are kept as the rule of law, and this Nation remains a sovereign nation. As my friend, Alfredo, said, as I talked with him over the weekend, he said, "You need to protect the American dream. I am here for the American dream."

He is here legally. He is looking forward to the day when he stands and raises his hand and takes that oath and becomes a U.S. citizen. And he too wants to have his very own personal story to tell about how he achieved the American dream.

□ 2015

And for Alfredo and his wife and thousands that come here every year legally to seek that dream, their message to us is: secure the border, and make legal entry a priority. Put your focus on illegal entry, and put a stop to that.

You know, the message that we are continuing to get from our constituents is: stop the bleeding, secure the border, narrow your focus. And I hear that from State legislators back in my State of Tennessee. If we don't do that, we leave with them the issue of addressing the problems that are then passed to the States: driver's licenses,

insurance issues, looking at educational and health care and law enforcement issues. They feel as if all of that is left for them to deal with. Our towns and our cities look at us and say: when it comes to law enforcement, we are the folks on the street. When it comes to who opens the hospital doors, that is us. When the school bell rings, we are the ones providing the service. And that is why they look at us and say: what your lack of action is doing is turning every single town into a border town and every single State into a border State.

So they want us to get in here and complete our work on securing this border, to look at the options that are out there. As we heard from some of our Border Patrol agents, put our focus on intelligence-driven, threat-based mechanisms. Look at what it takes to integrate electronic surveillance, human surveillance, and physical barriers. And we heard from some of the sheriffs that, yes, indeed, physical barriers work, and they were happy to give us plenty of information about how it had driven down crime.

The House has passed a bill; and if we need to pass one more, we can do that. We have to be certain that we demonstrate the results that are necessary for securing this border.

At this time I would like to yield again to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding again. And she used an interesting phrase earlier about securing our borders: stop the bleeding. It is a phrase I hear over and over and over from my constituents in the Fifth Congressional District of Texas. And, indeed, the House has now passed a border security bill that we believe would go a long way towards stopping the bleeding, and now finally the other body after many months has now acted.

Mr. Speaker, I know that Americans recall their Civics 101, and they know that you pass a House bill, you pass a Senate bill, they have to come together in a conference and come up with just one bill. It gets passed by both of our respective bodies yet again before it is sent to the President. Mr. Speaker, we have had an opportunity now to take a look at that Senate bill; and, frankly, most of us believe that it is wrong-headed and would head America in a very bad direction.

Number one, Mr. Speaker, we don't understand why, if there are contentious issues that are out there, and we agree there are many issues associated with illegal entry that are contentious, but if they are, can't we all come together, Democrat and Republican, after 9/11 and say we have got to secure our borders? Can't we at least as a body agree on that and maybe work on some of these more contentious issues later?

As we know, in the House bill what we do is, number one, we increase personnel on the border, at least immediately 1,000 additional agents, 1,500 K-9 units. We erect literal walls and virtual walls on much of our border. We

increase the sanctions for employers who knowingly hire those who enter this country illegally.

If you want to help stem the tide, you have got to deal with the magnets that are drawing people into the Nation illegally.

We end this ridiculous program known as "catch and release," which at least from my part of Texas catch and release is for fish; it is not for those who enter the country illegally. But what we have is a system where particularly those who are known as OTMs, those other than Mexicans, that are caught coming across the border, they are simply released until, Oh, why don't you show up, say, in 60 days and come to a hearing so we can decide whether or not to deport you. Well, we know how many will not show up for that certain deportation hearing. Our bill would end that catch and release program.

Our bill does a lot, Mr. Speaker, to stop the bleeding. But if you look at what the Senate bill does, it takes a different direction. Number one, it provides amnesty for many of those who entered the country illegally.

Mr. Speaker, we have been down this road before, about 20 years ago. It was one of those ideas that might have looked good on the blackboard, but guess what, it didn't work. It simply did not work. And now the Senate wants to offer amnesty to those who have been here for 5 years if they will pay some back taxes and some kind of fee. They want to provide them an opportunity to cut in the line of citizenship when, as I said earlier, I just welcomed 95 new Americans into this country who played by the rules, who waited for those 5 and 7 and 10 years to get here. And we are going to say, No, you played by the rules, we are going to reward these people over here who didn't. What does that say about the rule of law, Mr. Speaker? I don't think much.

Additionally, the Senate bill would provide benefits to those who come here illegally. It would provide Social Security benefits to those who have come to the country illegally.

Mr. Speaker, I serve on the House Budget Committee, and I have seen the most recent report of the Medicare and Social Security trustees. Unfortunately, Social Security is due to go broke at least one year earlier than last predicted. Now, we know our seniors are okay; but for future generations like my children, Social Security as we know it won't be there for them. And, guess what, the Senate wants to start handing out benefits to those who came here illegally. Additionally, they want to hand out in-state tuition, in-state college tuition for those who come to our country illegally. Mr. Speaker, how are you ever going to stop illegal entry when you are actually strengthening the magnet that is drawing people here in the first place?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman would yield?

Mr. HENSARLING. I would be happy to yield to the gentlewoman.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I want to participate in this discussion with you about the difference in these bills. And you are so right when you mention that our House bill would increase personnel on the border, put the K-9 units there, look at a virtual fence as well as a physical barrier, the electronic surveillance, and really tighten up that border. And one of the things we have said in the House repeatedly is, let us lay out an orderly process. Let us secure the border first; then let us move to the employer verifications which you mentioned. But let us secure that border first. Let us deal with the enforcement mechanisms.

And I am so delighted that you mentioned catch and release. As I mentioned earlier, the sheriffs that we had, two from California, one from Texas that were at our hearing, said catch and release is a huge problem. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, one county alone, Los Angeles County, 26 percent of the jail population is criminal aliens. After I left that hearing and I was through out in my district in Tennessee and I would talk to sheriffs, I would say, What portion, what portion of your incarcerated population is those that entered the country illegally? I have not spoken with anyone who has less than 10 percent. And the recidivism rate, as I mentioned the one sheriff who was before our committee talked in terms of upwards of 70 percent.

And when I talk to our law enforcement personnel, it is always a high percentage that is in their jail not once, not twice, but many times. That criminal alien population, the recidivism rate is very high. And you are exactly right, that is a cost to our local communities.

One of the concerns that we hear from when people talk about the Senate bill is they are concerned about wage protections, they are concerned about favorable treatment, they are concerned about a favorable way for those that entered the country illegally to pay their taxes or to access tuition or to receive Social Security benefits. And they look at us and they say, You know, this is not fair. This is not right. And there is great concern.

And I think that that is one of the reasons that the American people return to looking at the House bill and saying, this is what we want to see: first, secure the border. Second, deal with that magnet. Look at the employer sanctions, then deal with the enforcement mechanisms. And then, once you have stabilized the situation, look at the visa programs, but only after the situation has been stabilized.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. Again, I recall that there are at least a couple of other provisions of the legislation produced by the Senate that should be of interest to all of us as we look at two really

different approaches to meeting the challenge of border security.

Now, under our legislation, we would actually construct literal walls on certain portions of the border, which we know will be helpful. It doesn't solve the problem, but it is at least helpful in a multi-faceted strategy to deal with illegal entry into the Nation. While in the Senate bill, in the Senate bill they would require us to consult with Mexico before we constructed a wall on U.S. territory. Mr. Speaker, is that not effectively yielding sovereignty to a foreign nation?

Now, again, I respect Mexico. I have traveled extensively in Mexico. I have participated in U.S. interparliamentary council with legislators from south of the border. But to say that we must consult with a foreign nation before we take steps to secure our own borders and to secure the homeland? Mr. Speaker, that is just simply ridiculous. It is just simply ridiculous.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. As we talk about securing this border and the reason for it, and in the House bill we have stretches where there is a physical border and a fence that would be very difficult to penetrate, and there is a reason for that, Mr. Speaker. And the sheriff from Laredo, Texas, Sheriff Flores, was so articulate on this issue as we talked about the border there and spoke about the 18-wheelers, 6,000 to 7,000, 18-wheelers a day coming through that exchange point and through that immigration point.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is of concern for us is how you check the cargo that is in here. And as I mentioned earlier in my comments: illegal entry, human trafficking, drugs, weapons. As we look at this 6,000 to 7,000 18-wheelers a day that are on the road, and couple that with trucks and vehicles that are coming across the unpatrolled areas and open land, what we have are vehicles that are driving drugs and meth and arms into this country. We don't know what all is coming in them. What we do know is that in my State of Tennessee we have a problem with meth and dirty meth. They know that it is made many times in Mexico. When they confiscate and interdict, when the interdiction units bring in marijuana and cocaine and meth, they can tell where it is coming from by how it is packaged, how it is being delivered. And we know for a fact that this is a problem.

We have a county in west Tennessee that we worked closely with on this issue, and just a little under a year ago they put a meth interdiction unit on the road. Interestingly enough, nearly every time that unit goes out, nearly every time it goes out it is conducting an interdiction. And it is sad to see, but when you go in and look at that evidence room and look at the weapons and the drugs, and hear the stories of individuals that are being brought in, some of them against their will, it is not a story that is a happy story. It is a very sad story.

□ 2030

Our constituents are tired of this, and they want the borders secured so it will decrease that flow, decrease the opportunity for that flow of human trafficking and drugs and weapons.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas. Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the gentlewoman alluded to our border sheriffs, those on the front lines who are trying to stem this war against drugs and terrorists, who could infiltrate our southern border, because they are very knowledgeable about what is happening on both our southern and northern borders.

We were discussing differences between the House-passed bill which was supported by almost everyone on the Republican side of the aisle, versus the Senate bill, the Reid-Kennedy bill which most Republicans opposed. We talked about how the Reid-Kennedy bill grants amnesty to those who have broken our laws and how the Reid-Kennedy bill provides Social Security benefits and in-State college tuition to those who have entered this country illegally and broken our laws; and we talked about how the Reid-Kennedy bill will force us to consult with a foreign nation before we take steps to secure our southern border.

But another aspect of the Reid-Kennedy bill that we did not discuss is what it does to our local border sheriffs. And under that bill, under that piece of legislation, local police departments and sheriffs could not, I repeat, could not, Mr. Speaker, apprehend those who are in this country illegally unless they were found to be arrested for some other crime. In other words, merely being in the country illegally, the Senate bill would strip them of any power to apprehend, arrest and turn those individuals over for deportation.

Again, it is completely opposite of our House-passed bill that is trying to empower those on the front lines, to give them more resources and give them additional training to help and become partners with the Federal Government, with the Department of Homeland Security, with Border Patrol in trying to apprehend these people.

We know in many ways the flood of illegal entrants has changed over the years. Again, I know that many people who come here are not bad people, and I am not attempting to vilify them. I am the father of two small children, a 4-year-old and a 2½-year-old. And I know if I was born poor in Latin America and I couldn't feed my children, I don't know what you would do to stop me from crossing this border.

But because I have compassion for somebody does not mean that I want to hand them a check drawn upon the Federal taxpayer. Because I have compassion for someone does not mean I want to say, okay, we are going to let you cut in line and here are your U.S. citizen papers. No, Mr. Speaker, we have to secure the border.

After 9/11, knowing the intentions of al Qaeda, we have got to secure our

borders, regardless of the fact that many of these people are not bad people, and we understand what they are trying to do. But we have got to come up with a system, enough carrots and sticks, to where our Border Patrol are looking for tens of people trying to cross the border illegally instead of thousands of people trying to cross the border illegally every evening. Unless we put the enforcement provisions in the House bill in place, this simply will not happen.

Again, I know there are contentious issues. There are contentious issues about children who are U.S. citizens whose parents may be illegal here. There are suggestions for a guest worker program; and I, for one, am very open to a guest worker program.

But everybody says, let's stop the bleeding, let's control the border. Can't we at least agree on that? And let's seal our border to illegal entry, and then we can start dealing with the other facets of immigration, the other facets of a guest worker program, which I believe is part of our solution and not part of our problem. But it is all for naught unless we secure the border first.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, as you talk about focusing in on that issue of illegal entry and focusing in on border security and being certain that we deal with that first, first and foremost, handle this issue.

I appreciate the comments that you said regarding amnesty and how opposed to amnesty I personally am and how opposed so many of my constituents are because they feel that is such a dishonor to those who are coming here legally.

During my time at home, as we were holding town hall meetings and visiting with constituents, I have had constituents say, If you start passing out amnesty, then I want amnesty from the IRS. If you let those who have illegally entered this country choose to pay 3 years of 5 years of back taxes, I want to pay 3 years out of the past 5 years. Those are questions that we are getting from our constituents, and they are right to be asking them.

I had someone say they wanted amnesty from OSHA, a small business manufacturer, paying taxes and creating jobs and working hard. He said, They come into my plant, they stand there, they hold a meter; I want amnesty from that. I want amnesty from the EPA. So we are hearing this over and over.

Mr. Speaker, what it really speaks to is the breakdown of the rule of law. Why? Our constituents are so right to ask that question. Why? Why in the world would a body pass a bill that would do that? Why would they encourage that? Why would they not honor the rule of law? Why would they not choose to deal with the crisis situation, which is illegal entry, and focus on that?

That is the area where everyone agrees: Secure the border and secure it

now. Secure it first. Put additional people on the border. Put additional resources on the border because border security is national security and a very important component of our national security.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman is so right.

Again, we have Iraqis who have been apprehended trying to infiltrate our southern border. We know there are contacts between al Qaeda and human smugglers in Mexico. We know what was once a trickle of illegal entry is now a flood of illegal entry. What was once mainly low-income, poor Mexicans is almost a United Nations of illegal entry coming from all parts of the globe and planet. We ignore border control at our own peril.

Why, Mr. Speaker, would Senators REID and KENNEDY essentially say we are not willing to help you secure the border unless you grant amnesty to millions and millions of those who have come here illegal? And, oh, by the way, we want to present them with different welfare benefits and we want to give them Social Security. And, oh, by the way, we are not going to allow you to secure the United States border unless you go consult with foreign nations first.

Mr. Speaker, I don't understand this. The American people don't understand this.

Again, we must know that we are having a national debate about two and only two issues: Do we have the will to control our borders? And is there a right way and a wrong way to come to America?

Mr. Speaker, I decry those who are trying to turn this into some kind of a debate about ethnicity and who makes the best Americans. Some of the best Americans I know were not born in America. And the reason they make some of the best Americans is because they have known something besides freedom and opportunity, and because of that, many times they treasure our birthright even more than those of us who were born in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about taking the Statue of Liberty down; this is about protecting the Statue of Liberty. If we want to open wide the door of legal immigration, we have to shut down the door to illegal immigration. When we do, we will help secure our southern border, our northern border, and we will make the homeland more secure.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Texas for joining with us in this debate this evening and for continuing to talk with our colleagues and with the American people, because this is about illegal entry.

The situation of illegal entry and immigration are two completely different debates. Those who are trying to blend them into one are doing a disservice. We have to move forward in addressing illegal entry, and we have to move forward in securing this border.

Mr. Speaker, America is an incredibly welcoming Nation. It is a wonderful Nation that for years and centuries, we held our arms wide. We welcome those that choose to legally enter. We love the energy and vitality that they bring. We love their excitement. We love the way they bring an entrepreneurial spirit and they bring diversity and they bring to each of us a challenge, a very well-placed challenge, to work harder, to do better.

And we love it when they succeed, and we celebrate it. We take the time to celebrate that success, every little success, with them. And when they receive that citizenship after years of hard work, we are standing there with them, celebrating with them.

Some of them are in our families, some are in our extended families; and some of our close friends that we love like family have been through this process. And because of this, we stand with them in saying, Let's secure the border and end the practice of illegal entry into this Nation.

Let's be certain that legal entry and legal immigration are recognized and rewarded and celebrated in the appropriate way, as they are meant to be. But let's roll up our sleeves and let's get to work securing the border, ending illegal entry into this country, ending the human trafficking, ending the flow of drugs, ending the flow of weapons.

Let's be fair with our law enforcement officials and our Border Patrol agents that are on the border, who are tasked each and every day with keeping this border secure and, in turn, with being the first responders on the issue of border security. And let's be certain that we continue to put our focus right where it should be in realizing that border security and national security are one and the same.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, it isn't about immigration, it is about illegal entry. It is also about the rule of law.

There is a sense from the American people that we have lost control of these borders, and they are right. There is a sense that if we lose control of the borders, that then we are going to have more of the war on terror fought on American soil.

Mr. Speaker, it is issue number one. Securing this border is the most important issue that faces this body today.

I want to thank the House leadership for being so consistent in saying that this body will make border security the primary focus of our work. I want to thank our colleagues who are working on the field hearings and working to be certain that the message is communicated with our constituents and with our colleagues here on the Hill, that this House is ready to see borders secured and national security as our top priority.

□ 2045

THE IRAQ WATCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 4, 2005, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, again we come to the floor this evening as part of what we have come to call the Iraq Watch. And first and foremost, as my distinguished colleagues have in previous occasions, I note that we want to distinguish first and foremost the war from the warriors.

The men and women who serve this great country of ours deserve our unending respect and support for the kind of valor, the kind of job that they perform on a regular basis. Having said goodbye to far too many of them, many in our Reservists and National Guards who have been deployed, redeployed, deployed and then redeployed again, it is gut wrenching and heartrending to see what their families are going through. And so our thoughts and prayers are always with them, along with the support of this Congress.

I further would like to say that it is important to distinguish the war from the warriors so that we have an opportunity to lay out policy for the American public. I want to start this evening with a policy that I believe sends a very strong message to the men and women who wear the uniform and their families here at home that are caring for them and caring about them.

We have introduced a resolution that directs the President to send a clear message to the Iraqi Government that during this time of insurrection, a time when the Pew poll most recently indicates that 47 percent of the Iraqi people believe that it is okay and justifiable to kill American soldiers, it is unacceptable; and we must send a clear message to the Iraqi Government that American soldiers who have been killed, maimed, wounded, kidnapped, tortured, that we will not, in any shape, manner or form, tolerate amnesty for those who have perpetrated those acts against these brave men and women.

In my humble estimation, there is no reason why this shouldn't be a bipartisan resolution. We have over 100 Democratic signatures on the bill. We would like to get this bill passed before we adjourn for the August recess. We have been able to bring so many incidental bills to this floor by unanimous consent. Surely we can bring a bill to the floor that sends a clear message to our troops that we are putting the Iraqi Government on notice that it is not okay to kill, maim, kidnap, torture American men and women in our armed services.

And so it is my sincere hope, and we have had some overtures from the other side of the aisle, but so far, no movement. And this should be a non-partisan issue where we bring this resolution to the floor and take it up and pass it, and send it on to the President so that he can send a very clear message.

More important than sending a clear message to the Iraqis is also sending a message to our troops that we here in this country stand behind them and their sacrifice that they have made and will not see this all go for naught being waived with an amnesty provision in the midst of an insurrection of paramount proportions that is currently going on within Iraq.

So I want to start there. And then I would like to quickly just segue to a quote. This quote was put together by Graham Allison, and Mr. Allison is a Harvard professor who had this to say that "with regard to the current situation that we face in Iraq, it is clear that we have diverted essential resources from the fight against al Qaeda. We have allowed the Taliban to regroup in Afghanistan, fostered neglect of the Iranian nuclear threat, undermined alliances critical to preventing terrorism, devastated America's standing with every country in Europe, and destroyed it with the Muslim world."

Mr. Allison goes on to say: "Are we any safer today from the threat of nuclear attack, especially by way of a dirty bomb, than we were on September the 11?" His conclusion is, no. And he says: "It can be summed up in one word as to the reason why we are not safer: Iraq."

And with that, let me acknowledge and yield to my distinguished colleague from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), who has, from the outset of this war, through public forums and discussion, been on record of having protested the sending of our troops into Iraq.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you, my friend. I hope that you had a pleasant break. I know you were working, but I hope that you enjoyed your stay at home.

Professor Allison's observations really echo the conclusion that was reached by a bipartisan group of experts, including many from the administration of President Reagan, and that conclusion was that the United States is losing the war on terror.

We read that our friends on the other side of the aisle have made a political decision to talk about national security, to talk about terror and what they have accomplished. Well, the truth is, nothing has been accomplished, except the loss of thousands of American lives with a financial cost going on some half a trillion dollars.

You know, one only has to watch the nightly news. I was in the cloakroom earlier and watched the national news. It was depressing, it was sad, it was tragic. What is going on in Baghdad today and all over Iraq is an orgy of violence and blood-letting.

We hear these distinctions between sectarian strife, between insurgents versus the terrorists. I still can't quite figure them out. All I know is that lives are being lost, that we Americans are taking this burden on by ourselves.